

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 L-03 EUR-12 /052 W

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FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 133

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, XK ETRD. SE

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SEYCHELLES INTEREST IN HELICOPTERS FOR

INTER-ISLAND TOURIST TRAFFIC

1. MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO ROBERT DELORIE, WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF SEYCHELLES DEVELOPMENT PLANNING BOARD, IN SEPTEMBER 28 MEETING WITH CHARGE, ALLUDED TO GOS INTEREST IN POSSIBILITY OF INTER-ISLAND HELICOPTER PASSENGER SERVICE IN SEYCHELLES.

2. AT PRESENT, ONLY FOUR OF SEYCHELLES 20-30 ISLANDS WITH POTENTIAL FOR TOURIST DEVELOPMENT HAVE LANDING STRIPS FOR FIXED-WING LIGHT PASSENGER AIRCRAFT. GOVERNMENT IS RELUCTANT TO AUTHORIZE BUILDING OF LANDING STRIPS ON OTHER ISLANDS PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF HIGH CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE COSTS. ADDITIONALLY, HOWEVER, IN MANY CASES, ISLANDS ARE TOO SMALL TO ACCOMMODATE LANDING STRIPS WITHOUT SERIOUS IMPAIRMENT TO ISLAND'S NATURAL BEAUTY OR TOO REMOTE (15-100 MILES FROM MAHE) FOR EASY ACCESS BY BOAT.

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3. DELORIE SAID BRITISH COLONIAL GOVERNMENT HAD LOOKED INTO POSSIBILITY OF HELICOPTER PASSENGER SERVICE SEVERAL YEARS

AGO BUT APPARENTLY CONCLUDED THAT PASSENGER HELICOPTERS WERE NOT THE ANSWER TO SEYCHELLES' INTER-ISLAND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS. DELORIE BELIEVES NEW LOOK INTO HELICOPTERS OPTION NOW IN ORDER. ACCORDING DELORIE, BRITISH STUDY WAS NOT TARGETED AT AFFLUENT TOURIST MARKET. ALSO, ADVANCES IN ROTARY-WING AIRCRAFT TECHNOLOGY MAY HAVE OCCURED SINCE BRITISH STUDY WHICH WOULD MAKE UNDERTAKING ECONOMICALLY VIABLE.

4. ACTION REQUESTED-REQUEST DEPARTMENT INFORM U.S. HELICOPTERS MANUFACTURES OF POSSIBLE GOS INTEREST. EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE.

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